

# Whakamana Te Kete Ika

WCO - Recognising the outstanding values of Te Waihora



**Te Waihora Living Lake Symposium**

**16 Whitu / November 2011**

# Te Kete Ika a Rākaihautū



# Tāhuhu kōrero / Background

## ✧ WCO 1990

- ❖ Originally applied for in 1986 by NZ Wildlife Service to protect wildlife habitat under threat from drainage and reclamation
  - ✧ Wildlife habitat includes birds and invertebrates but not fish
  - ✧ Customary values and the significance of the fishery to Ngāi Tahu was not recognised
    - ❖ Pre-RMA, pre-Ngāi Tahu Land and Fisheries Waitangi Tribunal Reports, pre-Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Settlement and pre-Ngāi Tahu Claim Settlement

# Why a new WCO?

## ✧ Whakamana Te Kete Ika

- ❖ To get recognition of the primary importance of Te Waihora as a fish basket
- ❖ Crucial role of lake opening in spring and autumn for fish recruitment and health
- ❖ Ngāi Tahu previously opposed Lake Opening Consent and agreed to 5 year consent with investigations for a better regime

# Ngā kōrero / Evidence

- ✦ Mark Solomon – Overview of Ngāi Tahu and Te Waihora Management Board
- ✦ Ake (Maria) Johnson – Historical use of lake and changes since 1920s
- ✦ Donald Brown – Customary fisheries, changes and current quality
- ✦ Ta Tipene O'Regan – Significance & status of Te Waihora within in Ngāi Tahu culture
- ✦ David O'Connell – Work of Ngāi Tahu since 1990 to recognise & protect Te Waihora
- ✦ Craig Pauling – Ongoing, contemporary significance and barriers to mahinga kai
- ✦ Nigel Scott – Contemporary significance of and efforts to sustain customary fisheries
- ✦ Marty Bonnett – Native fishery and timing of opening for fish recruitment
- ✦ Ken Hughey – Significance of wildlife, specifically native birds
- ✦ Poma Palmer – 1990 Order, datum, joint management plan
- ✦ Philippe Gerbeaux – Significance of Indigenous wetland vegetation
- ✦ Cathy Begley – Planning and policy matters and consistency

“The Lake feed us all year ... When I came back ... I could not believe what I was seeing... I would not swim in the Lake anymore and I wouldn't let my mokopuna swim in there either” (Ake Johnson)

“Without the ability to manage the lake for a range of other purposes important to Ngāi Tahu, the lake will reach a tipping point from which there will be no turning back. If this happens, Te Waihora becomes an empty larder and a place of shame for Ngāi Tahu...My customary right is linked strongly to success and a positive outcome in the future, but it is hanging by a fine and fragile thread and I am concerned that it is close to breaking, leaving me with no connection” (Donald Brown)

“Te Waihora is one of the central hinges in Ngāi Tahu history” (Tipene O'Regan)

“Customary catch landings for these species [tuna/eel and pātiki/flatfish] at Te Waihora are exponentially higher than any other tribal freshwater fishery in the takiwā due to the abundance and accessibility of these species in the Lake” (Nigel Scott)

# Ngā Hua / Results

- ✧ Name changed: *Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere*
- ✧ Datum sorted: *1937 Lyttelton vertical datum*
- ✧ Outstanding features added:
  - ❖ Habitat for wildlife, *indigenous wetland vegetation and fish*
  - ❖ *Significance in accordance with tikanga Māori in respect of Ngāi Tahu history, mahinga kai and customary fisheries*
- ✧ Autumn opening: *between 1 April-15 June*

# E heke mai nei / into the future...

## ✧ Already taking positive effect...

- ❖ Recent protocol meeting and spring opening decision was a success - as the values of the fishery were able to take their rightful place
  - ✧ Has lead to many positive outcomes for the lake – including a large amount of mata/whitebait being caught and other evidence that many fish have entered the lake
    - ❖ Opened: 3 Oct at 1.0m (closed a day later and was re-opened on 6 Oct at 0.81m) and closed: 10 November at 0.59m
- ❖ We now need to work on the new opening consent and be creative about new ways to do this:
  - ✧ including alternative structures, opening sites, closing mechanisms and the potential for special fish passage options